

CLAIMS

1. A method of regulating apoptosis, said method comprising introducing into a cell an RNA construct comprising a nucleotide sequence which is homologous to mRNA within said cell, wherein said mRNA includes genetic information of a gene
5 element involved in the regulation of apoptosis.
2. A method according to claim 1 wherein said gene element is involved in the suppression of apoptosis.
- 10 3. A method according to claim 1 or claim 2 wherein said gene element is Bcl-2.
4. A method according to claim 3 wherein the gene element comprises a nucleic acid molecule, or part thereof, selected from the group consisting of:
 - (i) a nucleic acid molecule as represented by Figure 6 or a functional fragment
15 thereof;
 - (ii) a nucleic acid molecule which hybridises to any of the nucleic acid sequences in (i) and which has siRNA activity;
 - (iii) a nucleic acid molecule which is degenerate as a result of the genetic code to the nucleic acid sequence of (i) and/or (ii) above.
- 20 5. A method according to claim 1 or claim 2 wherein said gene element is Bcl-X_L.

6. A method according to claim 5 wherein the gene element comprises a nucleic acid molecule, or part thereof, selected from the group consisting of:

(i) a nucleic acid molecule as represented by Figure 7 or a functional fragment thereof;

5 (ii) a nucleic acid molecule which hybridises to any of the nucleic acid sequences in (i) and which has siRNA activity;

(iii) a nucleic acid molecule which is degenerate as a result of the genetic code to the nucleic acid sequence of (i) and/or (ii) above.

10 7. A method according to claim 1 or claim 2 wherein said gene element is a viral homologue of a gene involved in the regulation of apoptosis.

8. An siRNA construct having a nucleotide sequence which is homologous to mRNA transcribed from a gene element involved in the regulation of apoptosis.

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9. An siRNA construct according to claim 8 wherein said construct is from 15 to 25 nucleotides in length.

10. An siRNA construct according to claim 9 wherein said construct is from 19 to
20 23 nucleotides in length.

11. An siRNA construct of any of claims 8 to 10 comprising;

(i) a nucleotide sequence that is homologous to a part or fragment of the nucleic acid sequences in Figure 6;

(ii) a nucleotide sequence which is degenerate as a result of the genetic code to the nucleic acid sequence of (i) above.

12. An siRNA construct according to any of claims 8 to 11 comprising a
5 nucleotide sequence that is homologous to Bcl-2 mRNA nucleotides 354-372.

13. An siRNA according to any of claims 8 to 10 comprising;

(i) a nucleotide sequence that is homologous to a part or fragment of the nucleic acid sequence in Figure 7;

10 (ii) a nucleotide sequence which is degenerate as a result of the genetic code to the nucleic acid sequence of (i) above.

14. An siRNA construct according to any of claims 8 to 10 or claim 13 comprising a nucleotide sequence that is homologous to Bcl-x_L nucleotides 347-366.

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15. A method of treating a disease or condition associated with inappropriate apoptosis comprising administering to a subject an RNA construct wherein said RNA construct has a nucleotide sequence which is homologous to mRNA present within a cell of said subject and wherein said mRNA includes genetic information of a gene
20 element involved in the regulation of apoptosis.

16. Use of an RNA construct of any of claims 8 to 14 in the regulation of apoptosis in a cell, wherein said RNA construct has a nucleotide sequence which is

homologous to mRNA within the cell and wherein said mRNA includes genetic information of a gene element involved in the regulation of apoptosis.

17. An RNA construct for use as a medicament.

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18. Use of an RNA construct for the manufacture of a medicament to induce apoptosis.

19. Use of an RNA construct for the manufacture of a medicament for the
10 treatment of colorectal cancer.

20. Use of an RNA construct for the manufacture of a medicament for the treatment of viral induced cancer.

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